

## GIVES EXPERIENCE IN GREAT BATTLE

Lieut. Protheroe in Thickest of Fight at Attack on Neuve Chapelle.

## IN CHARGE OF BRITISH ARMORED AUTO CAR

Shells Burst All Around Him. He Writes to His Brother at Arlington, Va.

His personal experiences in one of the greatest battles of the European war, at Neuve Chapelle, while in charge of the heavy armored lorries with three-pounder guns, with shells bursting all around him, is told in a letter by Lieut. Arthur Protheroe to his brother, J. Protheroe, of Arlington, Va. Lieut. Protheroe is attached to the armored automobile section of the Royal Naval Division and had previously taken part in Winston Churchill's Antwerp expedition last fall. He writes as follows:

"As you know, I got this job at a moment's notice and had to rush off to a place near Sevenoaks to join the Duke of Westminster's squadron. When I got there on Friday night I found they had already left for Dover en route for France, and as there were no more trains that night I had to travel the next morning. I got to Dover at 2 p. m. and found some of the cars and men already on board two steamers ready to start. I was put in charge of the heavy armored lorry with three-pounder guns and their crews on a little tramp steamer called the *Mersey*. She had been better days and had had so many bumps that the sign read, 'The M—se.' Her captain was named Jones, and a very Welsh one, too, his name did not mean anything to me, but was more than his ship did for my stomach."

"After a lot of bumping and Welsh swear words and a collision with one of the turbine cross-channel steamers we at last got away from the quay in awful weather, the wind blowing a hurricane. We passed a number of destroyers in the harbor and had the honor of being hailed by one of them. The crew were tried in every known language, but could not or would not reply, so they locked the whole lot up on shore and put a guard on the boat."

"When we cleared the harbor the skipper showed me the various buoys and also the submarine traps—wonderfully clever things which one should not talk about. The good ship *Mersey* started on her journey amidst the loud cheers of the chauffeur, 'petty officers,' sailors and the swears of the Welsh skipper. We left Dover at 5:30 o'clock in the afternoon and reached Dunkirk at 6 o'clock the next morning. We rolled and pitched and were tossed about like a cork the whole night, spent the night on the captain's bridge, and was not seasick, though I can't say I felt well. The boys were all very ill, but there was more groaning on board that night than in all the base hospitals in a week. Sunday morning, Monday and Tuesday I pushed about like a madman finding a place for the men to sleep, garage for the cars, rations, etc., and Wednesday got a wire from the duke, who had gone up to the front. Bring up the three armored three-pounder lorries to M—."

"During the journey this happened three times, for after the first few miles the road is now only wide enough for one car; all the rest of the road has been gradually broken away and is left deep in slush and mud. We could only drive them at about five miles an hour, and then could not keep on the road. However, things were not going too badly, and I was beginning to congratulate myself that there was only another four kilometers to go when I saw a string of about twenty or thirty lights coming down the road to meet me. And not an inch to spare either side! Luckily I pulled up opposite a deserted cottage, and up came the transport officers in the leading car."

"Gently told him that the lorries weighed six tons, and that if they once got off the road, they would remain there for the rest of the war. We both

had too far to go to make reversing possible, and we looked to be in a hopeless position until a brilliant idea struck me and I like an old-fashioned puzzle. When we did was this: We let one wagon come on to the cobbles which were in front of the cottage. Then our three lorries moved up the road past the cottage and the one wagon proceeded on its way. We then backed down the road and let another wagon come up, and this went on for twenty-eight times until we had passed them all."

## Ambulances Busy All Night.

"When I reached M— I reported my arrival to the headmaster who was shot in Gen. Butler. He was seated in a room, surrounded by Sir Douglas Haig's staff and studying maps and getting in reports of the day's battle, which had been tremendous. We had 700 German prisoners and we had received 2,300 casualties. He asked me my name and shook hands, and then inquired if I had had my dinner. When I said 'No,' he said, 'Go off and have some food at my staff quarters, and then come back as you want to give your orders for tomorrow.' He sent one of his staff with me and we had a jolly good meal, and then I returned. He kept me waiting some time and then told me where I was to report myself next morning at 5:30, with two of the armored cars."

"He then produced a map and showed me where to go, and I soon got into the middle of one of the biggest battles of the war. It was terrible—all kinds of shells dropping with a whistle and a thud all around us—Jack Johnson's sending out clouds of black smoke, shrapnel bursting in the air and high explosive shells bursting with a terrible flash and report. (I forgot to mention that I had some miles back, and at the time had only one car with me.) I then left my car and went to a deserted cottage and walked to the farm where the headquarters were, feeling as if I were walking in the midst of the most extraordinary noise produced by 370 of our guns, not to mention the noise of the German shells bursting."

"The general showed me on the map some houses which he said he wanted destroyed, and also showed me a map where our trenches were, and out I went again. Whilst I was talking to him one of his shells had just burst our field telephone wire outside the farm."

"I was strolling down the road to go to the car and was about thirty yards away from it when down came a shell whistling like a rocket, plump into the middle of the road between me and the car! The shock of the explosion did not knock me over, but simply dazed me for a few seconds. I then found a hole in the road about four feet deep, so I had to go back to the general and tell him I could not advance until the road was repaired. So I received orders to go back to where I had left the first car. The men in the car were not hurt, though the earth and stones had been thrown right on to it, and they collected pieces of the shell as curios. I have a piece now—it was a 3.2 inch."

"While we were preparing to return another shell came down in a plowed field about fifteen yards away, but did no damage except to throw up all sorts of dirt. We returned to the first car and waited there for further instructions. Presently the captain's bridge, and a way we went. We found the engineers had repaired the road, and we went down it backward until we got a view of the roof of the house, and we started banging at it. The Ger-

mans soon saw us, and the big shells began to fall so near us that we had to decamp—after we had done a good deal of damage to the houses. "We spent the night in a ruined and deserted village; little except bare walls, though a few houses still remained intact. I found one and it was occupied by three dear old French women, women and some beads with my bread and cheese for supper. I slept like a top, despite the fact that the shells were falling the whole time, and in the morning when I wanted to find some one to make me a cup of chocolate—the old women were in the cellar."

"During the early morning the shells were falling quite close to me, killing a number of the villagers—fourteen, I believe—and wounding about thirty. Then the exodus began, and I believe every one except my three old women and the Tommies, resting from the trenches, decamped. We then got orders to shell the houses again, but found them on fire. The sight was more wonderful and awful than any one could possibly describe; the English shells were going over our heads one way and the German the other way."

## Shells Bursting All Around.

"Near to us were the trenches, one line of fire with bursting shells, incendiary bombs and grenades being thrown and fired across just like lights on the ends of sticks, and great black clouds from the coal boxes, flashes from the shrapnel and explosive shells, and the constant whistle of all the shells coming overhead. High up in the air you could see the aeroplanes observing our artillery fire, and little balls of black smoke all around them caused by the bursting shells of the German anti-aircraft guns, and on the ground the Tommies advancing on their hands and knees, firing their rifles off, and then getting up and charging; sometimes successfully, sometimes to be all wiped out. One regiment that day lost 900 out of 1,300. A large number of casualties are caused by our own artillery fire, but it is impossible to avoid it to a certain extent. I returned that night with a very thankful frame of mind to Estaire. I got a good bed. This morning we went right up to the trenches, and shelled some houses held by Germans only 800 yards away. We demolished them, but had to scoot as they started, dropping shells all around us. One car got pegged and we had to get it out under fire, and tow it with the other car."

"I have now got back to Dunkirk, and shall be here for a few days as the senior officer in charge of these armored cars has arrived from England; my short command is over for the present. I expect to be going with some light armored car to Nieuport about Wednesday to help the Belgians, and then shall be going back to relieve the officer in charge of heavy lorries, as he will need a rest by that time."

## CIVIL SERVICE RULES WAIVED.

Five Special Pension Examiners to Obtain Clerkships.

With the concurrence of the civil service commission, the President has rescinded the paragraph of the civil service rules excepting from examination five special pension examiners to investigate fraudulent and other pension claims of a criminal character and has authorized the transfer of the examiners to clerkships in the competitive classified service in the bureau of pensions after appropriate non-competitive examination by the civil service commission.

That action was recommended by the acting secretary of the interior and the commissioner of pensions, on the ground that the men are young, active, energetic and well qualified for work as stenographers, typewriters, clerks, and for making special investigations, and their services would be lost by reason of the failure of appropriation for their salaries during the ensuing fiscal year. Under the present appropriation act a reduction of eighty-eight is made in the force, and only 25 per cent of the vacancies can be filled by promotion or demotion. The transfer of these men, it is asserted, will prevent a corresponding reduction in the force, which can be ill afforded on account of the recent increase of work.

## GONZAGA ALUMNI ENJOY DINNER AND VAUDEVILLE

Banquet at Ebbitt Attended by Many Graduates of School and Their Guests.

A banquet was held last night at the New Ebbitt House under the auspices of the Alumni Association of Gonzaga College, at which the "old boys" told of their youthful experiences and at which Mgr. James Mackin of St. Paul's and Rev. Eugene Del. McDonnell, president of Gonzaga, were the principal speakers. E. S. Jones, president of the alumni association, was toastmaster.

Vaudeville acts were staged and songs were sung under the direction of George O'Connor and Matthias Cantwell, Edward Yeager, John J. McCarthy, William J. Koerth, Frank D. Fuller, Norman B. Landreau, B. G. Ferry, Jr., J. A. Saul, H. A. Mullan, John F. Donoghue, Edward Becker, E. Volst, R. E. White, R. P. Osborne, S. Dolan Donohoe, Edward Halloran, F. De S. K. Kavanaugh, F. A. Ostmann, F. Kenna, Charles W. Flackher, W. C. Flackher, Charles F. Kramet, John Reed, Martin S. Conley, James B. Cahill, John W. Langdale, James L. Sullivan, R. B. Devereux, F. L. Neubeck, C. B. Colford, W. H. Shea, Charles L. Perry, William F. Normoyle, J. J. Walsh, James E. Hayes, A. B. Wessling, E. D. Welch, Benjamin W. Reiss, P. W. Pilling, P. Quill, Thomas J. Lane, J. M. Wheatley, H. B. Merritt, Martin E. Horne, F. T. Henley.

## Twelfth Lecture on Life of Paul.

Dr. John Britton Clark is to deliver his twelfth lecture on the Life of Paul this evening at the Calvary Baptist church, 8th and H streets northwest, beginning at 8 o'clock. He will use as his subject, "Caesarea—On the Way to Rome." This is one of a series of fifteen lectures which Dr. Clark is delivering on the Life of Paul to the Christian Endeavorers of the District.

## Present at Banquet.

Among those present were: Very Rev. Alphonsus J. Donlon, S. J., president of Georgetown University; Rev. David J. Roche, S. J., vice president of Georgetown University; Very Rev. M. A. Waldron, O. P., president of the Catholic University of America; Rev. Augustus J. Duarte, S. J., vice president of Gonzaga College.

## WORKING OUT DETAILS OF BIG FLEET REVIEW

Navy Officials Plan Water Carnival and Land Parade of Atlantic Ships' Crews.

With May 17 selected as the date for the review of the Atlantic fleet in New York harbor by President Wilson, Navy Department officials today were working out the details of the review and of events to follow ashore. These include a water carnival the night of May 17 and a land parade the next day by bluejackets and marines from the fleet, federal troops and other military organizations.

The President will remain in New York until May 18, and the reviewing party which he will head will include members of the cabinet, members of Congress, diplomats and others.

After the events in New York maneuvers of the fleet are to be held about May 20 off Narragansett bay, to be followed by a rendezvous in Hampton roads shortly after June 21. Between June 21 and 25 the fleet will begin its long cruise for San Francisco and pass through the Panama canal about July 4.

President Wilson has definitely decided that it will be impossible for him to be present at the ceremony incident to the formal opening of the canal in July.

## Rehearing in Oil Case Denied.

Application for rehearing of the Mid-west oil case has been denied by the Supreme Court of the United States. It was the decision in this case which upheld the validity of former President Taft's order withdrawing from entry public oil lands in California and Wyoming.



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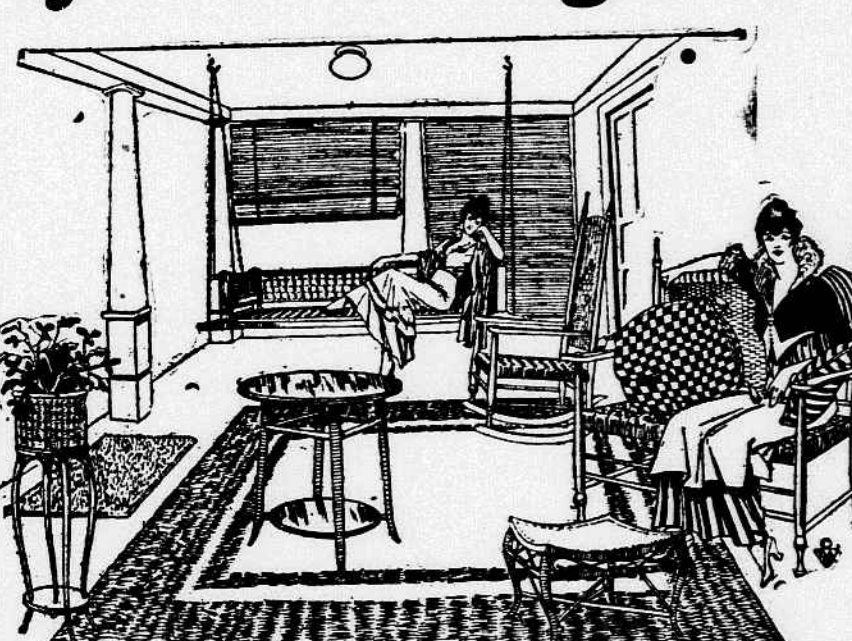
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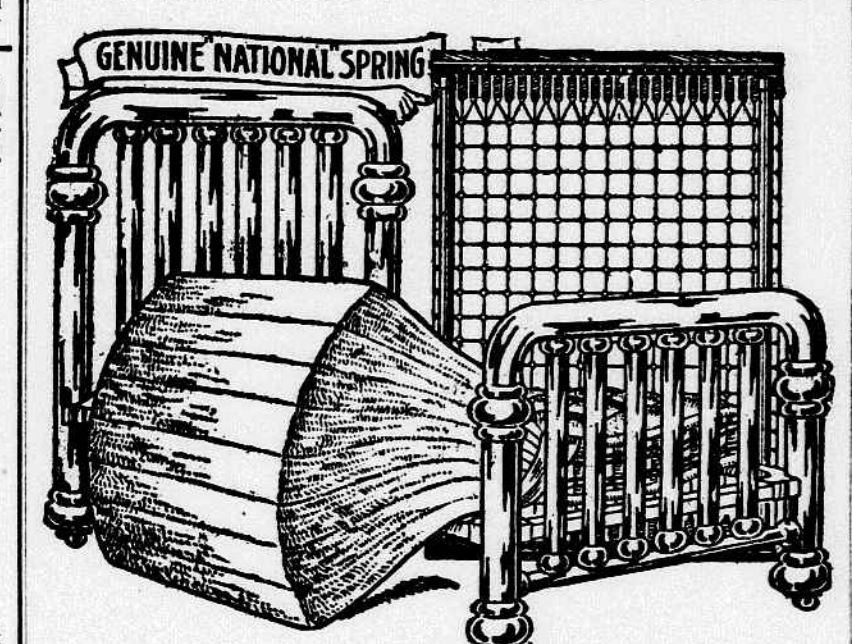
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